



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

March 17, 2010

President Albrecht
Gateway Technical College
3520-30th Ave.
Kenosha, WI 53144

Dear President Albrecht,

We are writing to express our disappointment and concern about the announced closure of Gateway's Early Childhood Lab (GECL), and to ask you to reverse this decision and keep this valued facility open.

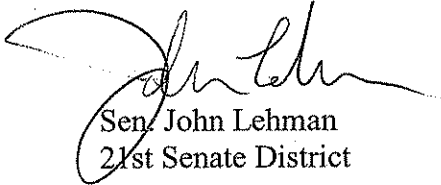
The Gateway Early Childhood Lab is a vital part of Racine's community, providing not only high quality child care, but a unique and greatly needed workforce development opportunity. The GECL is also a key community partner, working closely with the Racine Unified School District, local employers, Racine County Head Start, and students and educators throughout Gateway's tri-county region.

As we all work to ensure Racine's economic vitality and growth, we cannot ignore the role that quality childcare plays in our economic infrastructure. In a community where high quality childcare options are limited, the GECL has long been lauded for providing, in an exceptional way, a needed service to local parents and employers. The GECL also plays a critical role in training our region's future early childhood educators, providing a practical and extremely effective workforce development opportunity that we cannot afford to lose.

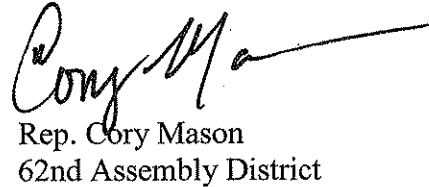
Closing the GECL would also represent a tremendous missed opportunity, in light of the Governor and the Department of Children & Families' (DCF) proposed YoungStar quality rating system for child care. DCF estimates that nearly a million new dollars could come to the Racine region through YoungStar's higher reimbursement rates, training and technical assistance to providers, and the establishment of a regional administrative and rating entity. Gateway Technical College, with its well-respected Early Childhood Education program and the GECL, would be a strong competitor to be selected as this regional entity. Without the Early Childhood Lab, however, the likelihood of Gateway being chosen as the regional leader and administrator of this exciting new initiative is greatly diminished.

As state legislators who have faced the worst budget crisis in Wisconsin's history, we certainly understand the budget constraints that Gateway is facing. However, closing Gateway's Early Childhood Lab would represent, at best, short-term savings, dramatically undermined by the tremendous return on investment we currently enjoy as a result of the Lab's quality childcare provided to countless local children, and by the unparalleled service to our community and excellent workforce development the Lab provides, all of which benefit our entire region. We urge you to reconsider this decision and to keep the Early Childhood Lab open.

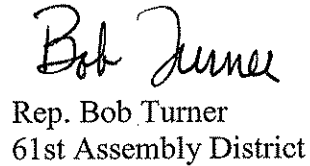
Sincerely,



Sen. John Lehman
21st Senate District



Rep. Cory Mason
62nd Assembly District



Rep. Bob Turner
61st Assembly District